

c) Remarks

The claims are 17-40, with claims 17 and 30 being independent claims.

Claims 17 and 30 have been amended to more clearly define the present invention. Claims 18-29 and 31-40 have been amended to properly depend from claims 17 and 30. Support for amended claims 17 and 30 may be found, inter alia, on page 20, lines 4-19 of the instant specification.

Claims 17-25, 28 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Choo '579 and Fujimoto '523.

Claims 26 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Choo '579 and Fujimoto '523, further in view of Sander '087.

Claims 30-36, 39 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Choo '579, Fujimoto '523 and Ando '805.

Claims 37 and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Choo '579, Ando '805 and Fujimoto '523, further in view of Sander '087.

Applicants respectfully traverse the grounds of rejection.

Prior to addressing the merits of rejection, Applicants would like to briefly discuss some of the key features and advantages of the presently claimed invention. The present invention is directed to an excimer laser capable of oscillating light within the ultraviolet region. The excimer laser includes a waveguide tube that is used for exciting the laser gas in the gas supply path structure into a plasma state. The wave guide tube supplies a microwave to the laser gas in the gas supply path structure and a plurality of elongated slots are formed along a bottom portion. The microwave is guided from the

upper part of the waveguide tube and the microwave propagates in the waveguide tube to be radiated through the slots to the outside of the waveguide tube. The radiated microwave is guided through the slots and into the gas supply path structure. The microwave then excites the laser gas in the supply path structure to generate an excimer laser light.

As the Examiner has admitted on pages 2 and 4 of the Official Action dated December 3, 2002, Krasnov '762 does not teach a waveguide unit for guiding microwaves into said supply path structure. Choo '579 is directed to a microwave excited gas laser that includes waveguides, but Choo's waveguides do not have a plurality of slots. Fujimoto '523 is directed to an excimer laser apparatus with a gas flow structure that is provided with a dust particle removal means. Ando '805 is directed to an apparatus comprising a convergent-divergent nozzle for controlling a flow of fine particles and a method for adjusting the particles' flow speed. Neither Fujimoto '523 nor Ando '805 teaches a waveguide.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the references, whether considered separately or in any combination, discloses or suggests the combination of elements now claimed. In particular, the cited references fail to show or suggest the above waveguide unit having a plurality of slots. A *prima facie* case of obviousness, therefore, cannot prevail.

Wherefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request that all rejections be withdrawn and the subject application be passed to issue.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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